

# READ THROUGH THE BIBLE 2010

## Week 2 Reflections

January 11 – 17, 2010

Genesis 25-40 and Matthew 9-12:50

This week's readings begin in the Old Testament with Isaac's story, starting with the birth of his twins, Jacob and Esau. We see Esau trade his birthright, the special honor given to the firstborn son. He bartered lasting benefits and spiritual blessings of the birthright for the immediate desires of hunger and pleasure. It is so easy to exaggerate our circumstances, just as Esau did, distorting our perspective when attempting to choose the best options. Short-term gains often win out over long-term goals, both in Biblical times as well as today. This story repeats with Jacob and his mother, Rebekah, deceitfully tricking Isaac into indeed giving the birthright to Jacob. God had already declared His plan to her, yet she took matters into her own hands. Rebekah (and Jacob) were so wrapped up in their plan that they no longer saw the long-range consequences of their actions. As Jacob matures, he demonstrates more of an enduring outlook, persisting toward what was important in working for 14 years for the privilege of marriage. God had perhaps shown him (and us!) a model of service that keeps an eye on the long term. Through the initial story of Joseph, God shows us again that taking action based on transient passions (jealousy and anger) is not the answer as Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery to get rid of him. I wonder what would have happened if Joseph's brothers sought God's vision rather than their own?

People of limited vision are showcased in this week's excerpt from Matthew as well. Jesus' entry into the lives of the Pharisees disrupted their dependence upon a temporary set of rituals. In Mt. 12:43-45, Jesus describes the attitude of the nation of Israel, but the religious leaders in particular. Concern over the rituals of the day caused them to miss the whole point of the Temple (Jesus). Filling our hearts with God's Word and a love for Him will set us on a path to look long-term, prioritizing what is worthwhile and, giving a more lasting, eternal outlook to our actions.

Questions to ponder:

What area(s) of my life are limited by short-term vision?

How can I see my present circumstances through God's perspective?